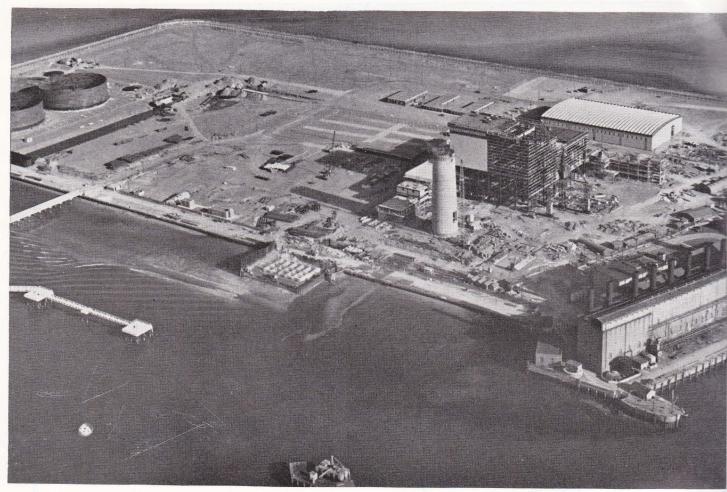




CONTENTS

							PA	AGE
Opera Season 1970		•••		•••			•••	3
The RTE Symphony	Orchestra				•••			15
ARTISTES:								
Conductors		•••	•••	•••			5	5,7
Producer						•••		9
Chorusmasters		•••					•••	II
Chorus		•••	•••	•••				13
Principals							17	-29
Operas:								
La Boheme	Cast	•••	•••	•••		•••	•••	30
	Synopsis	•••		•••	•••	•••		43
Rigoletto	Cast			•••		•••		32
	Synopsis				•••	•••		49
Tosca	Cast			•••	•••	•••		34
	Synopsis					•••		52
La Traviata	Cast	•••		•••				36
	Synopsis			19	•••			56
Andrea Chénier	Cast					•••		38
	Synopsis						•••	60
Dublin Grand Opera	Society:							
Works produced si	nce Foundation							65
Governing Body			na na	m deb	1			67
Guarantors	Test sub inc	•••	TIGO	bnela				69
Patron Members	ALL SI WAY				hie ei	10000	•••	71



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LA BOHEME, Puccini
RIGOLETTO, Verdi
TOSCA, Puccini
LA TRAVIATA, Verdi
ANDREA CHÉNIER, Giordano

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NAPOLEONE ANNOVAZZI GIUSEPPE MORELLI

Producer SANZIO LEVRATTI

Chorus Masters

Visiting: VITTORIO BARBIERI

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Opening Night Monday, 30 March, 1970

Gala Night, Tuesday, 7 April, 1970

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TOSCA Callas, Gobbi, Bergonzi Chorus & Orchestra of the Paris Opera Georges Pretre HMV Angel SAN 149/150 (SLS.917/2) (Highlights HMV ASD 2300)

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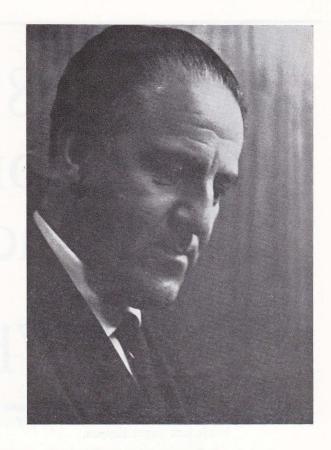
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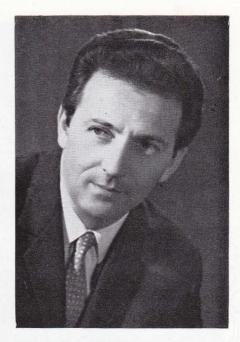
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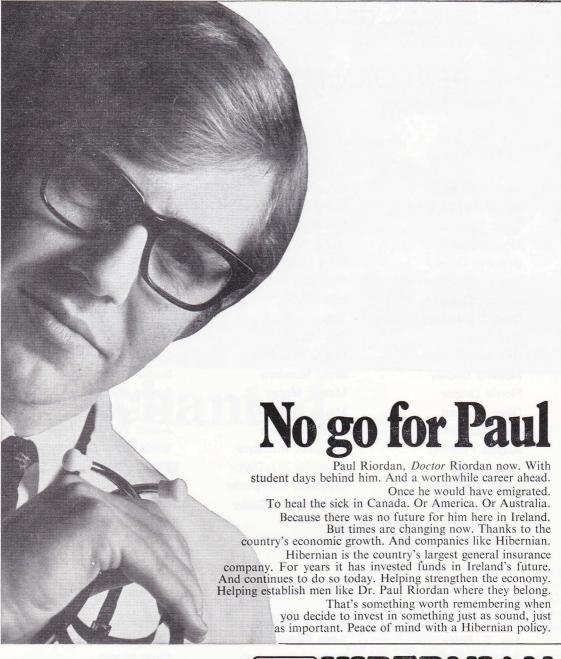
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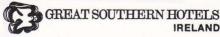
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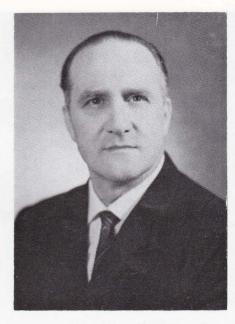
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DANIELE BARIONICavaradossi in "Tosca"



RAIMONDO BOTTEGHELLI appears in all this year's productions



HELGE BÖMCHES

Colline in "La Boheme",
Sparafucile in "Rigoletto" and
Roucher in "Andrea Chénier"



All the geese in this picture can be found on the Wexford Slobs, one of Europe's finest wildfowl haunts. The Slobs were reclaimed from tidal estuary land in about 1845 and lie on the north and south sides of Wexford Harbour covering about 6,000 acres of arable and pasture land. First the Grey Lag (pale forewings—one bird hissing at the white Snow Goose) came in 1912 and increased to 6,000 in 1949. Since then there has been a dramatic decrease and Grey Lags are rarely seen here now. There has been a general population shift into Scotland from all over Ireland for reasons that are not fully understood. The Whitefronts (one juvenile with its parents and large head) have increased since 1935 and now number about 6,000. The Slobs are the only place in Ireland where one has a good chance of seeing the small transatlantic Canada Goose (standing above the Grey Lag Goose). Up to five Pink-feet can be seen each winter. Also from Canada are the white Snow Goose and the Blue Goose. The picture shows two Barnacle Geese flying away to east Greenland. A small flock winters on the Slobs. The Slobs are so important internationally that the Irish Wildfowl Conservancy will establish a national wildfowl refuge there.



18 Grey Lag Goose, Greenland

- 19 White-fronted Goose20 Pink-footed Goose
- 21 Lesser Snow Goose
- 22 Blue Goose
- 24 Barnacle Goose Taverner's
- 25 Canada Goose



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JOSEPH DALTON

Doctor Grenvil in "La Traviata"



MARIO D'ANNA

Marcello in "La Boheme" and
Georges Germont in "La Traviata"

Twenty-five



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FLAVIANO LABO
Rodolfo in La Boheme"

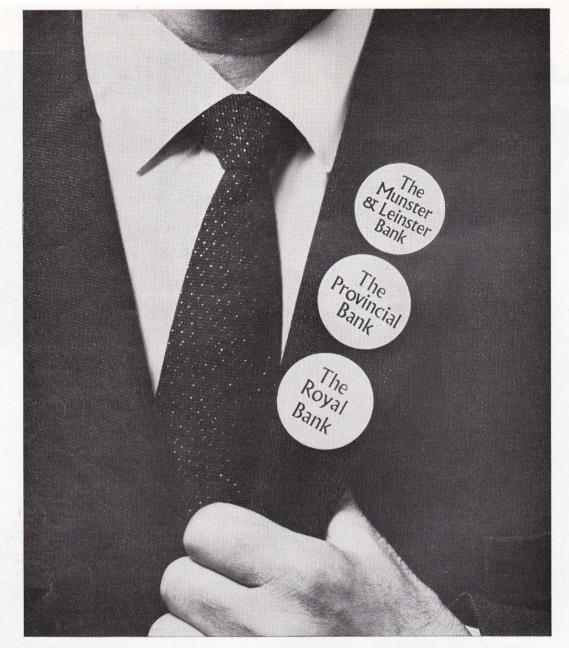


PEDRO LAVIRGEN

Andrea Chénier and
The Duke in "Rigoletto"



GIANCARLO PASTINEAlfredo in "La Traviata"



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ALDO PROTTI



GIUSEPPE SCALCO
Scarpia in "Tosca" and
Gerard in "Andrea Chénie"

Twenty-nine

GAIETY THEATRE, DUBLIN

30 March; 1 and 3 April at 7.45 p.m.

LA BOHÈME

By GIACOMO PUCCINI (1858-1924)

Libretto by Giacosa and Illica from "Scènes de la Vie de Boheme" by Henri Murger

FLAVIANO LABÒ Rodolfo, a poet MARIO D'ANNA Marcello, a painter MAURIZIO PIACENTI Schaunard, a musician HELGE BÖMCHES Colline, a philosopher ALBERTO CARUSI Benoit, their landlord MARIA LUISA BARDUCCI Mimi, a seamstress Musetta · ANN MORAN ALBERTO CARUSI Alcindoro RAIMONDO BOTTEGHELLI Parpignol GINO DE ROSSI Doganiere

Parisians, Waiters, Children, Soldiers

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Conductor: NAPOLEONE ANNOVAZZI

Producer: SANZIO LEVRATTI

LA BOHÈME

The Scene is set in Paris in the Nineteenth Century

Act I

An artist's studio in Montmartre

Christmas Eve

Interval

Act II

Outside the Cafe Momus in the Latin Quarter

The same evening

Interval

Act III

An inn near a Toll Gate

Two months later

Interval

Act IV

The studio in Montmartre

Some months later

La Boheme was first produced at the Teatro Regio, Turin, on 1st January, 1896

GAIETY THEATRE, DUBLIN

31 March; 4, 7, 10 April at 7.45 p.m.

RIGOLETTO

By GIUSEPPE VERDI (1813-1901)

Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave from Victor Hugo's "Le Roi s'amuse"

Rigoletto, court jester ALDO PROTTI Gilda, his daughter NICULINA MIREA CURTA PEDRO LAVIRGEN The Duke of Mantua. HELGE BÖMCHES Sparafucile, a professional assassin Maddalena, his sister MARGARITA TOMAZIAN ALBERTO CARUSI Count Monterone RUTH MAHER Giovanna, Gilda's duenna · LUCIANO PECCHIA Count Ceprano, a courtier MONICA CONDRON Countess Ceprano Marullo, a courtier MAURIZIO PIACENTI RAIMONDO BOTTEGHELLI Borza, a courtier MONICA CONDRON Page

Courtiers

R.T.E. SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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Conductor: GIUSEPPE MORELLI

Producer: SANZIO LEVRATTI

RIGOLETTO

The Scene is set in Mantua in the Sixteenth Century

Act I

A Ball in the Duke's Palace

Interval

Act II

Scene 1: A Street outside Rigoletto's house

Interval

Scene 2: A hall in the Palace

Interval

Act III

A derelict inn on the banks of the River Mincio

Rigoletto was first performed at the Fenice Theatre, Venice, on 11th March, 1851

GAIETY THEATRE, DUBLIN

2, 6, 9, 13 April at 7.45 p.m.

TOSCA

By GIACOMO PUCCINI (1858-1924)

Libretto by Giacosa and Illica from the play by Sardou

Floria Tosca, an actress LUCIA STANESCU

Cavaradossi, a painter · · · · DANIELE BARIONI

Scarpia, chief of police GIUSEPPE SCALCO

Angelotti, an escaped prisoner · · · · ALBERTO CARUSI

Sacristan MAURIZIO PIACENTI

Spoletta · · · · · RAIMONDO BOTTEGHELLI

Sciarrone, Scarpia's aide . . . LUCIANO PECCHIA

Shepherd Boy · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · OLIVE DUNCAN

Goaler · · · · · · · · TOM CARNEY

Altarboys, Churchgoers, Clergy, Police, Soldiers

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TOSCA

The Scene is set in Rome, June, 1800

Act I

The Church of Sant' Andrea della Valle

Morning

Interval

Act II

Scarpia's headquarters in the Farnese Palace

Later the same day

Interval

Act III as smale barrens at the Act III

The battlements of the Castel Sant' Angelo

Dawn the following day

Tosca was first performed at the Costanzi Theatre, Rome, on 14th January, 1900

GAIETY THEATRE, DUBLIN

8, 11, 15, 17 April at 7.45 p.m.

LA TRAVIATA

By GIUSEPPE VERDI (1813-1901)

Libretto by Francesco Maria Piave from "La Dame aux Camélias" by Dumas

AGNESE KRIZA Violetta Valéry, a courtesan Alfred Germont, her lover GIANCARLO PASTINE Georges Germont, his father MARIO D'ANNA RUTH MAHER Flora Bervoix, friend of Violetta Baron Douphol, Alfred's rival MAURIZIO PIACENTI Gaston de Letorières RIAMONDO BOTTEGHELLI Marquis d'Obigny, a nobleman ALBERTO CARUSI Annina, Violetta's maid MONICA CONDRON Doctor Grenvil, Violetta's physician JOSEPH DALTON

Friends of Violetta and Flora, Gypsies, Servants, etc.

LUCIANO PECCHIA

R.T.E. SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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Conductor: GIUSEPPE MORELLI

Producer: SANZIO LEVRATTI

Majordomo

LA TRAVIATA

The Scene is set in and near Paris in the middle of the Nineteenth Century

Act I

Violetta's salon in Paris

Interval

Act II

Scene 1: A house in the country, near Paris

Three months later

Interval

Scene 2: Flora's salon in Paris

Shortly afterwards

Interval

Act III

Violetta's Apartment in Paris

Some time later

La Traviata was first performed at the Teatro Fenice, Venice, on 6th March, 1853

GAIETY THEATRE, DUBLIN

14, 16, 18 April at 7.45 p.m.

ANDREA CHÉNIER

By UMBERTO GIORDANO (1867-1948)

Libretto by Luigi Illica

Andrea Chénier, a poet	*				PEDRO LAVIRGEN
Countess de Coigny					RUTH MAHER
Madeline, her daughter			,		ANGELA ROSATI
Roucher, Chénier's friend	· Title			L 19A	HELGE BÖMCHES
Bersi, Madeline's maid					MARGARITA TOMAZIAN
Charles Gérard, servant to the Counte					GIUSEPPE SCALCO
Fleville, a cavalier		. 1	eni ari	100	ALBERTO CARUSI
Abbé · · ·					RAIMONDO BOTTEGHELLI
Majordomo					LUCIANO PECCHIA
Incredibile, a spy	, F.				RAIMONDO BOTTEGHELLI
Madelon · · ·					RUTH MAHER
Dumas, President of the T	ribun	al	.000		ALBERTO CARUSI
Fouquier-Tinville, Attorne	y Gen	eral			HELGE BÖMCHES
Schmidt, a gaoler Sanculotto					MAURIZIO PIACENTI

Courtiers, citizens, soldiers, servants, peasants, prisoners and members of the Revolutionary Tribunal.

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Conductor: NAPOLEONE ANNOVAZZI

Producer: SANZIO LEVRATTI

ANDREA CHÉNIER

The Scene is set in Paris before and after the French Revolution

Act I

The Ballroom in the Countess de Coigny's chateau before the Revolution, 1789

Interval

Act II

The Café Hottot in Paris

Five years later, 1794

Interval

Act III

The Revolutionary Tribunal

Interval

Act IV

The courtyard of the St. Lazare prison

Andrea Chénier was first performed at La Scala, Milan, on 28th March, 1896

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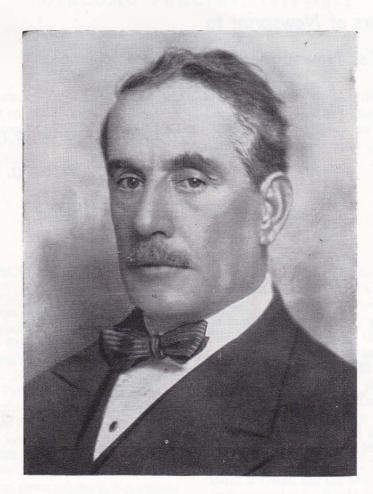
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GIACOMO PUCCINI 1858-1924

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LA BOHÈME

GIACOMO PUCCINI, 1858-1924

"La Bohème" came after "Manon Lescaut" and before "Tosca". For the plot, the librettists, Giacosa and Illica, drew on Murger's novel "Scenes de la Vie de Bohème". The opera's first performance was at the Teatro Regio, Turin, on 1st January, 1896. The young Toscanini was the conductor. On that occasion the reception was mixed but very rapidly the opera became one of the most popular in the entire Italian repertoire.

ACT I

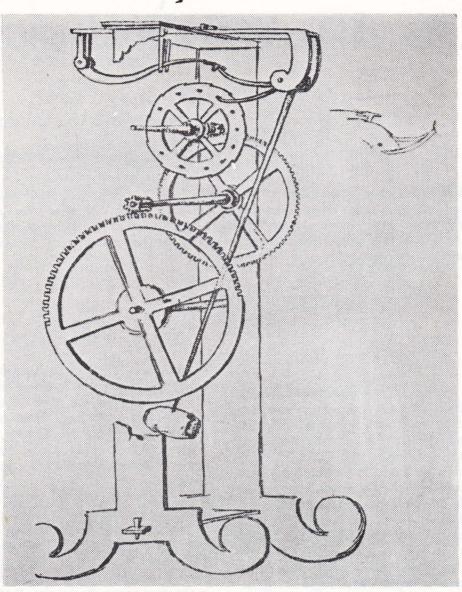
There is no overture. The curtain rises almost immediately, and discloses a typical Bohemian studio of a poverty-stricken aspect, on Christmas Eve, where the four Bohemians - Rudolph, a poet, Marcel, a painter, Schaunard, a musician, and Colline, a philosopher, live and work. From the window one sees the snow-clad roofs of Paris. But there is no fire in the stove, and Marcel (who is painting a great picture of the Passage of the Red Sea), and Rudolph (who is writing a masterpiece) are very cold. They finally decide to light a fire with the manuscripts of one of Rudolph's great tragedies. Colline enters, despondent at not having been able to pawn anything, but regains his spirit at the sight of the cheerful blaze. Their spirits rise still further when Schaunard enters with provisions and wine and explains that he has earned money by playing for a gentleman who was anxious to drown the noise of a neighbour's screeching parrot and by poisoning the bird. They decide to drink and then to dine at a restaurant. The landlord, Benoit, enters demanding his rent, and having drunk some wine, confesses to an escapade, whereat the four artists, in mock indignation, turn him out of the room. They then propose to go to dinner at the Café Momus in the Quartier Latin, but Rudolph says he must stay in to finish an article for a paper. The others have scarcely gone when a timid knock is heard at the door and Mimi enters and excuses herself, explaining that

as she was on her way to her room her candle had gone out. She is seized with a fit of coughing and swoons, and when she revives she lights her candle and is about to go out, when she remembers that she had put her key on the table. As Rudolph goes to the door, his candle, too, is blown out, and they look for the key in the dark, but in vain, for Rudolph has artfully put it in his pocket. As they both grope under the table, their hands meet, and this gives Rudolph his opportunity for singing his Romance "Che gelida manina" and he goes on to explain who and what he is. In reply Mimi sings her famous song "Si, mi chiamano Mimi". She explains that her real name is Lucia, and she is a flower girl living in an attic in the same house. By this time Rudolph's companions have grown impatient and call for him from below. He answers that he will follow as soon as he can. Then Rudolph passionately declares his love for Mimi in a duet which follows "O soave fanciulla". As the curtain falls they go out arm-in-arm, singing the last bars of the duet.

ACT II

In the second act we see another aspect of Bohemian life, its reckless irresponsible gaiety, as a background to a human tragi-comedy. We are in a public place

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outside the Café Momus in the Quartier Latin, the favourite haunt of the four Bohemians who were nick-named "The Four Musketeers" because they were inseparable. There is a great crowd, the hawkers are plying their trade, all the bustle of Christmas Eve is at its height. Colline, Schaunard and Marcel, who have not been able to find room in the crowded café, take possession of a table on the pavement. Rudolph and Mimi join them a little later, the girl wearing a smart bonnet which Rudolph has bought for her. They order supper, and presently Musetta, a former flame of Marcel, enters accompanied by a rich admirer, Alcindoro, a Councillor of State, whom she treats very badly. She sees Marcel and tries in vain to attract his attention. Marcel is in great agitation and his friends enjoy what they call "the stupendous comedy". He is about to go, unable to bear it any longer, when Musetta sings her Waltz song "Quando me'n vo'" which holds him spellbound. Mimi, with feminine intuition, guesses that Musetta and Marcel really love each other. Musetta determines to get rid of her troublesome admirer, feigns to have a great pain in her foot, and sends him to a boot shop to buy a pair of easier shoes. As soon as he is gone Marcel rushes forward to her and a great reconciliation takes place. She joins the merry party and finally they follow the patrol which now enters with its drums and pipes, carrying her off shoulder high, just as Alcindoro enters and is confronted with the bill for the whole party.

ACT III

About two months have elapsed, and we are taken to an inn on the outskirts of Paris on a frosty morning. The Customs Officers are guarding the gate and vendors of provisions peer through it. From the opposite direction-from Paris-comes Mimi in great agitation, and asks a servant to tell her where Marcel is. She brings him out and Mimi appeals to him-"Oh, good Marcel, oh, help me!" She complains of Rudolph's mad groundless jealousy. Marcel tells her they had better part and she begs him to aid her, and he goes in to wake Rudolph, while Mimi conceals herself behind a tree. Rudolph comes out and explains to Marcel—"I want a separation from Mimi"— He suspects her, he says, and is heart-broken that he has no money and cannot do anything to cure her of the terrible illness which is killing her. In spite of Marcel's efforts to prevent Mimi from hearing what Rudolph says, she understands and is overcome with grief, and her sobs and coughing reveal her presence to Rudolph; as they fall into each other's arms Musetta's laugh is heard from inside the tavern. While Mimi and Rudolph exchange vows, and Mimi tells him she won't return "Donde lieta usci" Musetta and Marcel have a fierce lover's quarrel, and the blending of tragedy and comedy in the quartet which ensues makes the scene one of the most beautiful in the Opera. As the curtain falls Mimi and Rudolph go out arm-in-arm singing of the happiness which awaits them at the coming of Spring.

ACT IV

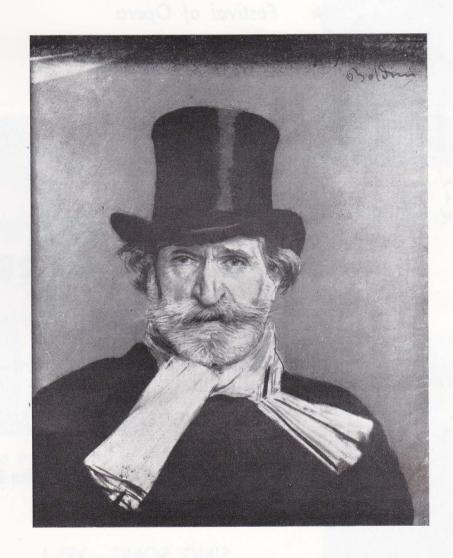
We are now back in the Bohemians' garret. Marcel and Rudolph are talking. Marcel has seen Mimi, and Rudolph has seen Musetta, both living in luxury; each strives to appear indifferent as he hears the story. They utter their feelings, however, in a duet, "O Mimi tu più non torni" and Rudolph gazes lovingly at Mimi's old bonnet which he takes from a table drawer. They are interrupted by Schaunard and Colline, who arrive carrying provisions—bread and herrings—and they have a meal, pretending that it is a great banquet. After the meal they grow merry and dance; their games ending with a mock duel with the fire irons between Schaunard and Colline. When the fun is at its height, Musetta enters, greatly agitated, and tells them Mimi is with her but too weak to climb the stairs. Rudolph rushes out and brings her back and places her gently on the bed, and Musetta tells the others how she had found Mimi; she had begged to be allowed to die with Rudolph. Mimi tries to effect a reconciliation between Musetta and Marcel. Mimi is cold and hungry but there is nothing to give her. Musetta takes off her diamond earrings and gives them to Marcel, bidding him to sell them and buy food and fetch a doctor and then goes out with him. Colline now makes up his mind to pawn his overcoat and addresses it in mock heroic terms "Vecchia zimarra, senti". Schaunard then goes out, leaving Rudolph and Mimi alone. Mimi, who had seemingly been asleep, now speaks to Rudolph, who has all the time been by her bedside "Sono andati". They talk of the past, and as they talk the music recalls their first meeting. A violent cough interrupts her, Musetta and Marcel come back, she with a muff, he with medicine. They busy themselves with the medicine, and Mimi eagerly warms her hands with the muff, while Musetta prays for her friend. At this moment, the sun comes out to shine on Mimi's face. Musetta motions Rudolph to hang her cloak over the window. As he does so Mimi falls back dead. Rudolph flings himself on the bed sobbing, while the others stand around, grief stricken, as the curtain falls.

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RIGOLETTO

GIUSEPPE VERDI, 1813-1901

This opera was composed by the 38-year-old Verdi for the Fenice Theatre, Venice, where it had its première in March, 1851. It was the first of his long series of world successes and remains firmly in the repertory as one of the most popular of all operas. The libretto by Francesco Maria Piave is an adaptation of Hugo's "Le Roi's amuse". To satisfy the strict Austrian censorship of the day, which would not tolerate a public representation of attempted regicide, the plot was transferred from the Court of France to the ducal palace at Mantua.

ACT I

After a short orchestral prelude the curtain rises on a ball in the ducal palace. The dissolute Duke of Mantua enters telling a courtier, Borza, of his latest infatuation - this time with an unknown girl whom he has noticed in church every feast day. Just now, however, he is openly flirtatious with the Countess Ceprano to the obvious annoyance of her husband. In the flippant aria Questa o quella ("This one or that one") the Duke declares that all women are fair game to him if only they are pretty. Ceprano is taunted by Rigoletto, the Court jester, a hunchback, whose privileged gibes all the courtiers must endure. Cynically Rigoletto suggests to the Duke that the affair with the Countess would be furthered if the husband were made away with. Rigoletto wanders off and Marullo amuses the others with the story that the buffoon has an innamorata! In this they see a chance of revenge on their tormentor. Now Monterone forces his way in to denounce the Duke, whose latest victim was the old man's daughter. He too is cruelly mocked by Rigoletto, but before being hurried away the old man launches a father's curse on the hunchback, who is left cringing in superstitious fear.

ACT II, SCENE I

The double setting shows a street and, opening off it, the courtyard of Rigoletto's house wherein

his treasured daughter Gilda is kept in strict seclusion. Rigoletto enters still brooding on Monterone's curse which haunts his mind. He is thinking of the daughter whom the courtiers think to be his mistress. A sinister figure emerges from the shadows. It is Sparafucile, a professional assassin. To Sparafucile's offer of services at a reasonable fee Rigoletto replies he has no present need of them. Alone, in the splendid aria Pari siamo, his jesting thrown aside, Rigoletto reflects bitterly on his deformity and the ignominy of his employment in the Duke's household. A very moving duet ensues between Gilda and himself in which memories of her dead mother are recalled. But the Duke has discovered Gilda's dwelling to which he now gains entry while Rigoletto is still in the house by bribing Giovanna, Gilda's duenna. He remains concealed in the courtyard. As he leaves, Rigoletto cautions Giovanna once more to guard his treasured Gilda well. When he is gone, the Duke emerges to tell Gilda that he is Gualtier Maldè, the supposed student whom she has often noticed in the church. A love duet follows, E il sol dell' anima. The Duke departs and in the coloratura aria Caro nome the young girl muses on her first love. Outside, the courtiers are gathering for the abduction that Ceprano has planned for his revenge. By means of a trick Rigoletto, blindfolded, is involved in the escapade, not suspecting its purpose. When he discovers the outrage he recalls Monterone's curse and the curtain falls to his anguished cry La maledizione!

Gaiety

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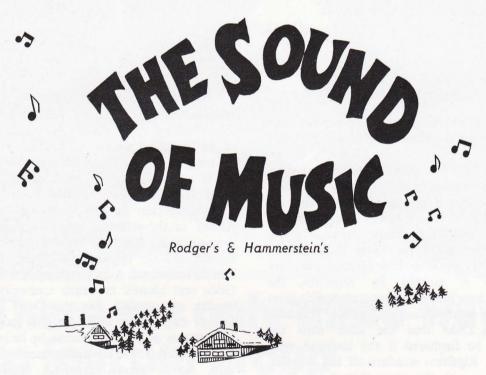
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ACT II, SCENE 2

In the romance Parmi veder le lagrime the Duke laments the disappearance of Gilda. The courtiers, however, come to tell him of the trick played on Rigoletto and that Gilda is already in the palace. After the Duke's exit, in search of Gilda, Rigoletto appears distractedly searching for his daughter suspecting her to be with the Duke. His appeals to the courtiers are received with jeers until they realise the girl they have abducted is not his mistress but his daughter. When the distraught Gilda rushes in Rigoletto, suddenly invested with great dignity, inveighs against the baseness of these courtiers and furiously orders them from his presence, Corteggiani vil razza dannata. Intimidated by the change in Rigoletto, the courtiers go and Rigoletto hears from his daughter the story of her abduction. The Act concludes in a blazing duet, Rigoletto vowing vengeance on the Duke while Gilda, fearful for her lover, seeks to soften his anger.

ACT III

Another double scene; Sparafucile's lonely inn and beside it the banks of the river Mincio. The Duke has found another charmer, Maddalena, the sister of Sparafucile. Rigoletto has brought Gilda to witness for herself her lover's perfidy. Disguised this time as a soldier, the Duke is drinking and gambling. Debonairly he sings of the fickleness of women, La donna è mobile. This aria leads into the great quartet. At its conclusion Rigoletto, sending Gilda away, summons Sparafucile and hires him to murder the stranger in the inn, the body to be delivered to himself in a sack. A storm comes up. The Duke decides to remain overnight at the inn. Maddalena who has fallen for the young man's charm, endeavours to dissuade her brother, suggesting that if he substituted another victim he might still claim the reward. Gilda has stolen back and overhearing the conversation of the pair, resolves to save her lover by exchanging her own life for his. Thus it is she who becomes the victim and it is her body, enclosed in the sack, that is delivered to her father. Rigoletto, his vengeance satisfied, as he thinks, is about to consign his burden to the river when the voice of the Duke reaches him in a reprise of La donna è mobile. He tears open the sack and the dying Gilda is revealed to him. With her last breath she begs forgiveness for her lover and herself. The opera ends with the crashing chords of the curse - La maledizione which has exacted the full penalty.

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TOSCA

GIACOMO PUCCINI, 1858-1924

This melodrama of Puccini has been called an operatic "shocker". At any rate, its story has the strong flavour of the Italian "verismo" school. The lurid plot was drawn by the librettists Illica and Giacosa from the Sardou play which Bernhardt made famous.

The time is given precisely as June, 1800, and the characters have some relation to real historical figures of the period. Italy was then divided. The French under Napoleon occupied the North while Rome, from which they had only recently been dislodged, was held for the Royal House of Naples and Sicily whose Queen, Maria Carolina, sister of Marie Antoinette, is named in the opera but does not appear.

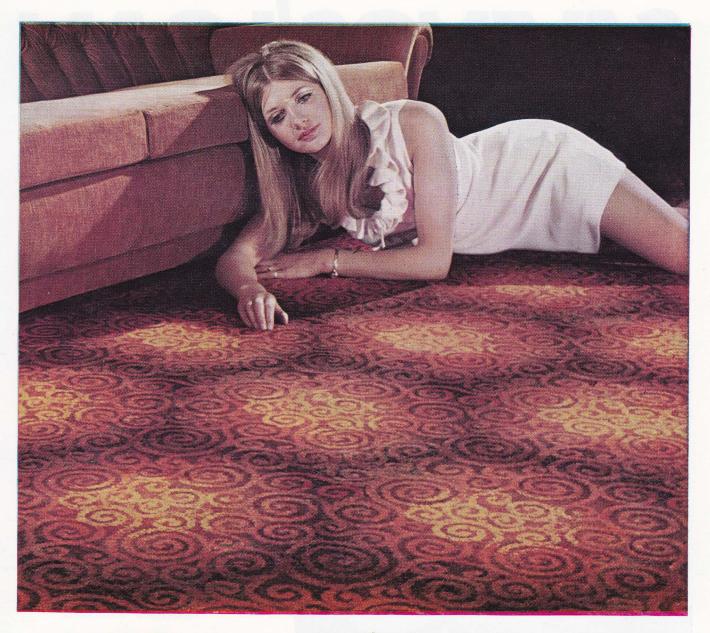
"Tosca" received its first production in January, 1900, at the old Costanzi Theatre (now the Teatro dell' Opera), Rome. The setting is Rome itself.

ACT I

With three tremendous chords from the orchestra, representing the brutality of the character of Scarpia, who dominates the opera, the curtain rises on Bernini's Church of Sant' Andrea della Valle, Rome. The chapel of the Attavanti family is on the right. A dishevelled figure enters hastily. It is Cesare Angelotti, an important prisoner of State, who has just escaped from the prison of Castel Sant' Angelo. He searches for the key to the Attavanti chapel and finds it at the foot of a statue of the Madonna where it had been hidden for him by his sister, the Marchesa Attavanti. As he disappears inside the chapel the Sacristan, a comic figure, hobbles in. Noon strikes and as the Sacristan concludes his Angelus, Mario Cavaradossi, a painter and Tosca's lover, enters to resume his painting of the Madonna. It is a blonde Madonna whose colouring and features reproduce those of the Marchesa Attavanti whom the painter had observed while at her prayers in the chapel. Disregarding the mutterings of the Sacristan who is scandalised by the painter's irreverence, Cavaradossi sings the aria Recondita armonia as he muses on the contrast between the fair subject of his painting and the dark beauty of his beloved Floria Tosca.

When the Sacristan has left Angelotti emerges and asks the help of his friend and political sympathiser, Cavaradossi. Just then the voice of Tosca herself is heard outside. As it grows more impatient, the painter hurries Angelotti back to his hiding place, pressing his own basket of food into the hungry fugitive's hand. When finally admitted Tosca is plainly ruffled by her lover's delay while the voices she has heard alert a suspicion that his companion may have been a lady — perhaps the Marchesa Attavanti whose

features she suddenly recognises on the canvas. She makes quite a scene of jealousy and temper - Floria Tosca was not for nothing the great prima donna of her day - until mollified by Cavaradossi's endearments and the promise of an assignation at his villa that evening (Duet - Qual occhio al mondo). She leaves the Church and Angelotti re-emerges. Cavaradossi directs him to his villa outside Rome where there is a dried-up well in the garden as a safe refuge should the place be searched. They exit hastily. The Sacristan enters, disappointed to find the painter gone and nobody to hear the great news — the (premature) report of Napoleon's defeat at Marengo - to celebrate which there is to be a Te Deum in the Church and a public holiday. Choristers and worshippers begin to assemble but all are visibly terrified by the sudden appearance (announced by the three great chords with which the opera opened) of Baron Scarpia, the dreaded Chief of the Roman police. He and his bailiffs have traced Angelotti to the Church. A search of the Attavanti Chapel yields a fan bearing the Attavanti crest and an empty lunch basket. The Sacristan admits the latter to be Cavaradossi's and that, though the basket is empty now, the painter had said that he would eat nothing that day. Scarpia at once connects Cavaradossi with the prisoner's escape. When Tosca re-appears, Scarpia hopes by working on her jealousy to discover from her something of the painter's movements. With the evidence of the crested fan which he pretends to have found beside the painter's easel, Scarpia suggests to Tosca (already disconcerted by finding the painter gone and his work abandoned) that her lover has met the Marchesa Attavanti in the Church and has already taken her to the villa. This provokes a violent outburst from Tosca. As she leaves Scarpia orders that she be followed.



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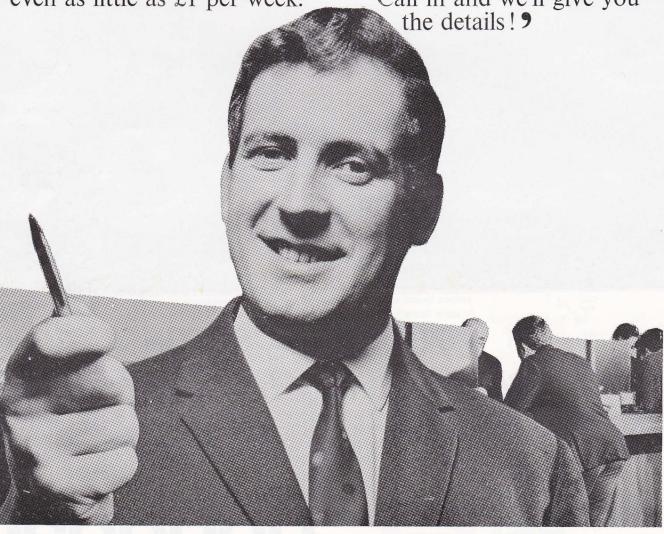
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The ritual of the *Te Deum* of Thanksgiving begins with tolling of bells and booming of cannon. A cardinal officiates. Against the swelling music of the sacred words, the voice of Scarpia is heard in unholy counterpoint as he declares himself ready to renounce his hopes of heaven if he could send Cavaradossi to his death and have Tosca for himself.

ACT II

In the Farnese Palace in Rome Scarpia sups and muses with relish on his hoped-for conquest of Tosca whose voice reaches him from the Queen's apartments in the music of the Cantata celebrating the victory. Spoletta, a police agent, reports that a search of Cavaradossi's villa yielded no trace of Angelotti. The painter has, however, been held and Scarpia orders him to be brought in for questioning. Cavaradossi tells nothing. Tosca has also been summoned by Scarpia and arrives as her lover is sent for further interrogation under torture in an adjoining room. Unnerved by Scarpia's relentless pressure and by the cries of her lover from the torture room, Tosca breaks down and betrays the secret of Angelotti's hide-out - Nel poggio nel giardino - "In the well in the garden". By telling Scarpia what he wants to know, she also incriminates her lover for abetting the prisoner's escape for which death is the penalty.

When the painter is brought in again — now limp and bleeding — he only upbraids Tosca for her betrayal and openly exults ("Vittoria!") when Spoletta brings the news that Napoleon had triumphed and not been defeated at Marengo. His words seal his fate and he is dragged away.

Scarpia now resumes his game of cat-and-mouse with Tosca. Blandly he makes his offer — she can save her Cavaradossi by surrendering to himself. Tosca's despair and revulsion at the infamous proposal are expressed in the aria — possibly the most beautiful in modern Italian opera — Vissi d'arte, vissi d'amore. In this so-called "Prayer" Tosca asks why she, who had lived only for love and for music and had harmed no living soul should be abandoned by Heaven to grief and shame like this.

Scarpia awaits her answer. Acquiescence is finally wrung from her as the executioner's drums are heard outside and Spoletta awaits Scarpia's orders for the disposal of the painter. But Tosca makes a condition — she must have safe-conducts across the frontier for both herself and Cavaradossi. Almost too readily

Scarpia agrees and in her hearing instructs Spoletta that while the painter's execution must proceed, it will be a "simulated" one — "as we did in the Palmieri case". While Scarpia writes the passports Tosca, leaning for support against the supper table, sees her opportunity. Grasping a knife from the table she is ready for Scarpia when he approaches her and plunges it into his heart. She watches his death struggles without remorse — "Die . . . and may thy soul be damned!" Only when at last he is still does she relent and cry: "Now could I forgive him". After prising the safe-conduct from the stiffening fingers, Tosca pauses for a moment to reflect that before this man whom she has killed all Rome had trembled — Davanti a lui tremava tutta Roma!"

With a macabre touch of theatre — Floria Tosca was an actress — she carries two lighted candles from the supper table and places them beside the corpse and then a crucifix on his breast before stealing from the room.

ACT III

Before daylight on the battlements of the Castel Sant' Angelo. The sound of sheep bells and the song of a shepherd boy are heard as he drives his flock to graze. The bells of Rome herald the dawn which will reveal the Eternal City and St. Peter's in the distance. A long orchestral passage is followed by the famous tenor aria — "E lucevan le stelle" as Cavaradossi awaiting his execution writes his farewell to Floria Tosca. As it ends Floria herself hurries joyfully in. There ensues an ecstatic duet beginning with her dramatic description of her killing of Scarpia and of how she has won freedom for both of them. He kisses the soft hands ("O dolci mani!") that she had stained with blood for him. Then hastily she coaches Cavaradossi for his rôle in the "simulated" execution that must take place. Fretfully she waits as the firing squad takes its position and the shots ring out. Cavaradossi falls. When the soldiers have marched away she gives the signal to rise. But there is no response. The bullets were real and Cavaradossi is dead. Scarpia has cheated to the last. Scarpia's murder has now been discovered and Spoletta and others rush in to take Tosca. Evading them she runs to the ramparts and with the words "O Scarpia, avanti a Dio!" ("Scarpia, we meet before God!"), Floria Tosca flings herself from the high parapet to death below.

LA TRAVIATA

GIUSEPPE VERDI, 1813-1901

"La Traviata" forms with "Rigoletto" and "Il Trovatore" the trilogy of Verdi's great popular operas. All three were performed for the first time within the short space of two years.

Based on Dumas' "La Dame aux Camélias" which Verdi had seen played in Paris, "La Traviata" received its première on 6th March, 1853, in Venice. Despite the enormous and instant success of "Rigoletto" at the same theatre two years previously, "La Traviata" failed dismally at first to please the public. The causes of the failure were several. There were the inevitable first-night mishaps. Some of the singers were ill and the last Act spectacle of Salvini-Donatelli, one of the most corpulent sopranos of her time, enacting the part of a heroine who dies of consumption excited the mirth of the audience. Then, too, the subject of the life and death of a demi-mondaine rather shocked the susceptibilities of an opera audience of the day which had already received the unaccustomed jolt of an opera in contemporary dress.

It was not long, however, before the opera achieved its due recognition and it has remained one of the best (if not the best) beloved of all operas.

The libretto is by Piave. The events take place in Paris and are usually ascribed to the early nineteenth century.

ACT I

In the salon of the beautiful demi-mondaine, Violetta Valéry, a party is in progress. Among the guests is Alfred Germont. He is introduced to Violetta by Gaston who explains to her that for a year and more the young man has loved her from a distance. Invited by Violetta to sing a drinking song, Alfred launches into the spirited Libiamo nei lieti calici in praise of the gay life. As the guests are about to go dancing in another room, Violetta is striken by a sudden faintness and a spasm of coughing—a sinister premonition of the fatal disease that already ravages her. She quickly recovers, however. As soon as they are alone, Alfred tells here of his long-felt love (Un di felice, eterea). Violetta at first receives this declaration lightly and advises

him that it were best to forget her. Seemingly as an after-thought when Alfred is about to leave, she gives him one of her camelias with the promise that she will met him again "when the flower has withered".

When all her guests have gone, Violetta's great scena, "Ah, forse è lui" begins. Strangely perturbed by her encounter with the young man, the brittle woman of the world wonders whether this might not be what she has never yet experienced—a serious love (un serio amore). With a bitter laugh she quickly dismisses these wistful thoughts. Her chosen path of frivolous dissipation must now, she knows, be followed to its end. But as towards the close of the brilliant cabaletta, the voice of Alfred reaches her from below her balcony we know that her resolve is already weakening and that the two are destined to meet again.



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ACT II, SCENE 1

Violetta and Alfred have indeed met again and have been three months together in her secluded country house near Paris. In his aria Dei miei bollenti spiriti Alfred tells of their happiness in this rural haven of peace. Annina, Violetta's maid, enters. She is returning, Alfred learns, from Paris whither she had been sent to sell most of her mistress's remaining possessions in order to pay the considerable expenses of the establishment. Greatly shocked and humiliated by this unexpected information he declares he will go himself to Paris at once to raise some money. When Violetta has re-entered, a visitor is announced. It is Georges Germont, Alfred's father, come to rescue his son from, as he imagines, the toils of a mercenary female. From being nonplussed by the dignity with which Violetta meets his charge ("I am a woman, sir, and in my own house"), old Germont is further discomposed when she quickly convinces him, with proof in hand, that hers is the money, not Alfred's, which pays for all this "luxury" he has indicated. He begs her, however, to leave Alfred, pleading that while the family scandal of their association remains, the young man whom his daughter loves will not marry her. Violetta at first rejects this strange demand—she would rather die, killed by the disease with which she is stricken, than give up Alfred. This dialogue proceeds in the form of a duet of much pathos. Finally, convinced by Germont's reminder that as soon as her youth and beauty fade she will have no hold on Alfred ("What then?" he asks), Violetta consents. In return she asks only a blessing of the old man. Germont goes to wait in the garden for his son. As Violetta is writing a farewell letter to Alfred the latter enters in search of his father. Concealing her letter from Alfred's eyes, Violetta embraces him and in the great outburst Amami, Alfredo, quant'io t'amo . . . Addio! (the climax of the opera) she declares undying love for him. She runs distractedly from the room. A servant soon enters with Violetta's letter. As Alfred reads the shattering words, Germont pére re-appears. Neither his comforting words nor his appeal (Di Provenza) to the prodigal to return to his family can calm Alfred's frenzy. Believing that Violetta has left him to return to Paris and a former lover, the Baron Douphol, Alfred dashes off in pursuit.

ACT II, SCENE 2

Paris. The salon in the house of Flora (mezzo-soprano), a friend of Violetta's. The guests are entertained by a ballet featuring Spanish gypsies and matadors. All Violetta's old friends are there.

News of her break with Alfred has already reached Paris so that on the arrival of Alfred, who is soon followed by Violetta on the arm of Baron Douphol, the atmosphere becomes electric. Alfred sits down at a card table and, excited by his phenomenal winnings, keeps up a run of ironic comments designedly offensive to Violetta and the Baron. The latter reacts, joins the card game and loses to Alfred. As they rise to go to supper the Baron remarks that he will have his revenge after supper. Alfred's reply is a veiled challenge to a duel. Violetta, in great agitiation, returns to the empty stage. She has sent for Alfred to warn him to beware of the Baron, a dangerous swordsman. Keeping her promise to his father, she maintains to him that she loves him no more and that the Baron is now her "protector". Enraged by this, Alfred loudly summons all the guests. Pointing to Violetta, he proclaims the favours he received from her and with the brutal words Oui testimon vi chiamo ch'ora pagato io l'ho ("I call you all to witness that I've paid in full") he throws his winnings at her feet. Old Germont, a witness to the shameful episode, disowns the son who insults a woman thus. The Baron challenges Alfred to a duel and all the company express their reproaches in the choral ending to the Act.

ACT III

The last Act is introduced by the beautiful orchestral prelude to which the curtain rises on Violetta's bedroom. She is sick and poor, with only the faithful Annina to attend her. It is early morning and Carnival time. Dr. Grenvil visits the invalid who is not deceived by his comforting assurances of recovery. To Annina the Doctor confides that her mistress has but a few hours to live.

Left alone for a moment, Violetta re-reads a cherished letter from old Germont which tells her that after the duel, in which the Baron was wounded, Alfred had to fly the country; that he now understood the nature of Violetta's great sacrifice and was hastening back to her. "Too late!" she cries and in the very moving soliloquy *Addio del passato* she pictures her approaching end, lonely and forgotten, her beauty gone. Outside the sounds of Carnival in Paris are heard.

Alfred arrives. After their ecstatic greeting the lovers dream of beginning life anew far away from Paris (Duet: Parigi, o cara, noi lasceremo). In her new-found happiness Violetta for a moment imagines her health returning and desperately clutches at the possibility of living. But her brief candle of hope soon flickers down again. She rallies only to give Alfred her picture in miniature, in memory of happier times, before expiring in his arms.



UMBERTO GIORDANO 1867–1948

ANDREA CHÉNIER

UMBERTO GIORDANO, 1867-1948

Giordano, Mascagni and Puccini were the leading exponents of the "verismo" school of Italian Opera. "Andrea Chénier" was Giordano's fourth opera but his first to achieve enduring popularity. The première was at the Scala, Milan, in March, 1896. The first Irish performance was the production by the Dublin Grand Opera Society on 23rd April, 1957.

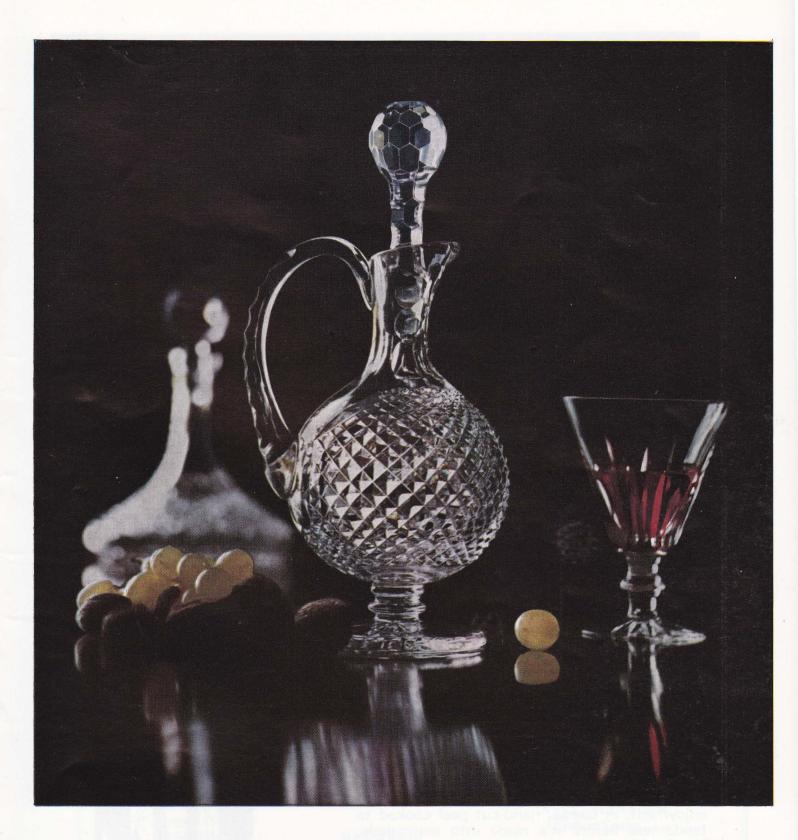
The life and death of the young French poet, André Chénier, are the broad basis of Illica's libretto (Illica was also one of Puccini's most successful librettists). Chénier espoused the cause of the Revolution but was later alienated by its excesses. Many of the incidents in the libretto are largely fictional. The setting is Paris on the eve and in the early years of the Revolution.

(Note: The names of the characters are given the forms—French or Italian—in which they appear in the libretto.)

ACT I

At the Château of the Contessa di Coigny a party is about to assemble. It is a gathering of aristocrats ignorant of the fate so soon to overtake the old régime. The Contessa's majordomo is busy directing the servants, one of whom is Carlo Gérard, who has imbibed revolutionary ideas from reading Jean Jacques Rousseau, besides nourishing a hopeless love for Maddalena, the Contessa's daughter. The spectacle of his old father struggling with a heavy piece of furniture incites him to an angry soliloquy (aria: "Son sessant' anni") on their employers' inhumanity and a prediction that very soon his own class will rise in hate to destroy their oppressors. The Contessa enters with Maddalena and Bersi, the latter's mulatto maid. The Contessa fusses about the arrangements for the evening and packs Maddalena off to don her party dress. Maddalena delays to complain to Bersi about the

bore of dressing up. Guests arrive and an Abbé, just come from Paris, brings news of the King's capitulation to the Tiers État. Though much dismayed by this, the volatile company quickly turns to the frivolous entertainment of the evening, which includes affected renderings of music and poetry. Chénier is invited to recite some of his verses but brusquely declines until, piqued by Maddalena's banter and moved by the attraction she holds for him, he launches into the splendid Improvviso ("Un di all' azzurro spazio") —one of the best known pieces in the opera. Commencing with a formal theme of love, Chénier mid-way switches to biting invective on the social evils of the time in terms that affront his aristocratic hearers, clerical and lay. The excitement resulting is fanned by the sudden incursion of a crowd of starving men and women led by Gérard. Ironically he introduces them-"Sua Grandezza la Miseria-His Highness Want!" They are quickly

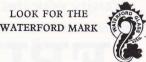


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hustled out but not before Gérard has torn off his livery, his badge of servitude, and flung it down as a challenge before his masters.

ACT II

Five years later, 1794, outside a café in Paris. The Revolution is well established and Gérard is a leader. Chénier too has gained fame but has come to be suspected as a critic of the Terror. Bersi, as a "Meravigliosa", is enjoying the freedom of the times but has yet retained contact with Maddalena. Gérard, still haunted by the memory of Maddalena (as Maddalena is by Chénier's), has set his spy, the Incredibile, to trace her. The spy, aware that Bersi is the link, has noted too that she and the poet are acquainted. Just now Bersi covertly seeks to gain Chénier's attention while he sits alone at a café table. Contemptuously she dismisses the Incredibile's effort to engage her in conversation. Chénier's friend, Roucher, comes to give him the passport which would permit him to leave France and avoid the danger in which he stands, but Chénier does not take it. He has been intrigued by frequent strange letters from a mysterious woman and he has come to beileve that his destiny is romantically bound to hers. The last letter has sought an assignation. The argument with Roucher is interrupted by the passing of a group of Deputies who are excitedly hailed by the crowd. They include Gérard himself, Roucher, Sièves, Carnot and Robespierre. Bersi, still watched by the Incredibile, whispers to Chénier that a woman in great peril and distress is coming to ask his help. It is Maddalena and in the duet that follows she recalls to Chénier their meeting in happier days at her mother's château. Desperately she pleads for the protection which he willingly concedes. However, their attempt to leave together is frustrated by Gérard, brought there by the spy. A sword fight takes place in which at the moment of being wounded by him Gérard recognises his former friend, Andrea Chénier. He warns Chénier that his name is on Tinville's list for execution. In the confusion Maddalena, Chénier and Roucher escape.

ACT III

The Revolutionary Tribunal. The Sanculotto Mathieu, a serio-comic figure, harangues the crowd. Gérard, recovered from his wound, tells the crowd of the growing threat to the new France from the counter-revolutionaries and their invading foreign allies. The women respond to his appeal for funds

by donating their trinkets. Blind old Madelon who has already lost all her sons to the Revolution now dedicates her last grandson to the cause. The mood of the crowd changes. They dance and sing the patriotic "Carmagnole". The Incredibile comes to tell Gérard that, as the newsboys are already shouting, the poet Chénier has been arrested. The woman (Maddalena), he says, will follow her lover to the Tribunal. At the Spy's urging Gérard begins to draft Chénier's indictment. As he writes, Gérard's conflict of mind is revealed in the great baritone aria, "Nemico della patria" ("An enemy of the fatherland") where he reflects upon the baseness of what he is about to do-to contrive the death of his friend not as an act of patriotic justice but, he admits, to destroy his rival in love. Maddalena herself arrives and in the duet Gérard tells of his love for her since the days of his serfdom, exulting now that she is in his power. The unexpected declaration suggests to Maddalena the path of escape taken by other heroines of opera-she offers herself to Gérard in exchange for her lover's life. In the principal soprano aria of the opera—"La mamma morta"—she relates the killing of her mother and the burning of their home by the mob; how since then she has lived in fear and hunger, sustained only by Bersi's affection and her love for Chénier.

Moved to remorse and shame by Maddalena's constancy and radiant vision of love as she describes it in the soaring phrases of the aria, Gérard agrees to try and save Chénier. The crowd returns to be pleasantly entertained by the day's blood-bath. Several victims are quickly consigned to the guillotine including a young woman, Idia Legray. Chénier is charged with writing against the Revolution. In the aria "Si, fui soldato" he defiantly asserts that his sword and his pen have honourably served La Patrie and that he is no traitor. Gérard courageously intervenes to deny the charge and to reproach the State that murders the poets who were its inspiration. The crowd, however, howls for the death sentence and Chénier is condemned.

Shortly before dawn in the Saint Lazare Prison. Encouraged by Roucher, Chénier reads the last verses he has written. Framed in the aria "Come un bel di di maggio" ("As on a fine May day"), the verses are a lyrical farewell to life. Gérard arrives with Maddalena. Having failed to save the poet he has at least been able to secure that Maddalena will be with him at the last. More, he connives with her in bribing the gaoler so that she may substitute herself for one of the condemned, Idia Legray, and go with Chénier to the guillotine. Gérard hurries away to seek Robespierre in a last attempt to save Chénier. But the tragedy moves rapidly on to the finale and the exciting music of the great closing duet reaches a climax as the day dawns redly and the pair are led off to execution.

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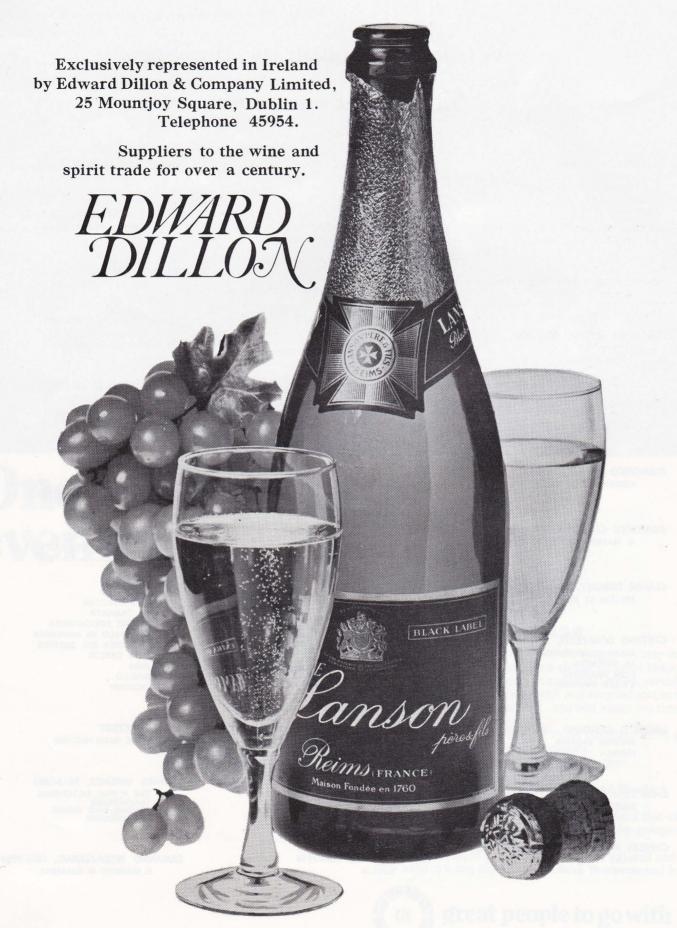
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